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# SIGMA XI QUARTERLY

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## EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Edward Orton, Junior  
Floyd Karker Richtmyer

Henry Baldwin Ward  
Samuel Wendell Williston

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## THE COLUMBUS CONVENTION

The records of the Columbus Convention which occupy the major part of this number of the *QUARTERLY*, give a correct account of the business transacted, but no such report can really show the spirit of the occasion. The business session was attended by a larger number of non-delegates than usual, and yet, the total was small in comparison with the membership of the Society. Among the residents of Columbus, and the thousand or more in attendance at the scientific meetings being held at the time, there were doubtless many who are members of Sigma Xi. Even if a good part of them were prevented from participating by other engagements, one must still acknowledge that the actual attendance fell far below the possible figure. This discrepancy is due, apparently, to lack of interest, or to ignorance of the fact that conventions are open to all members, even though voting is limited to accredited delegates. It would be a powerful influence, in arousing greater interest in the Society, and in diffusing knowledge of its aims and the results being achieved, if the attendance could be very largely increased.

There was no lack of interest among those present. The discussion was general, and led to a clearer understanding of weak points in the organization, as well as of greater opportunities opening before us. What a misfortune, that there were not ten times as many present, to aid in spreading abroad the results of these discussions. The enthusiasm shown in the meeting, would have been of great service to some members, and would have helped answer the question that comes up every now and then—is Sigma Xi really doing anything worth while? If you did not attend the Columbus Convention, make a note now that you lost something good and plan to come next time.

It was unfortunate also that the chapter representation was not larger. Because the Constitution has been amended so as to make a quorum consist of those duly accredited delegates who are present, it is possible to transact the necessary business, even if some delegates are forgetful and do not turn up, or if some chapters are indifferent and make no provision to be represented. The work of the Society is going on splendidly. The delegates who were at the convention brought reports of active and successful work in their chapters. They were eager to spread more widely the influence of a movement which they had found so valuable and they planned definitely to extend the usefulness of Sigma Xi to new fields. The chapters that were unrepresented lost an opportunity to gain information as well as inspiration and the mere review of the formal record of business transacted can not make good that loss. The Society would have gained something if there had been a larger representation of the chapters, but the chapters themselves would have been the greatest gainers.

The annual dinner was the largest which Sigma Xi has ever held, and would have been even larger if the capacity of the room had been greater. After tickets had been sold in excess of the normal seating capacity, the Ohio Union was reluctantly forced to refuse further appeals for places. In spite of the crowd the service was good, the dinner excellent, and everybody had a good time. The plan inaugurated by President Howe of bringing in a distinguished visitor as the principal speaker was an unlimited success, of course, with ex-President Charles W. Eliot as the speaker. What Doctor Eliot said on the significance of research made an especially strong appeal to the members, because it voiced the experience of one outside the membership of the Society, who had had unusual opportunities for measuring the influence in education of that for which Sigma Xi stands.

Members should examine the records of the Columbus Convention with a view to making recommendations to members of the executive committee for consideration at the annual meeting provided for in the new by-law. It is planned to hold this meeting if possible in the late spring or early summer so that a full report of its work may be laid before every active member of the Society in the September *QUARTERLY*. Individuals and chapters will then be

able to consider any proposals so fully that delegates to the general convention next winter can participate effectively in the discussions of the Convention and much more satisfactory progress can be made than is the case when new proposals have not had such preliminary consideration.

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The Alpha Chapter has published its yearbook for 1915-16 in the form of an attractive twenty-page pamphlet in stiff covers. By printing the first article of the Constitution and the pledge on the opening page, the aims and ideals of Sigma Xi are presented conspicuously to the reader. The programs for 1914-15 and 1915-16 which follow demonstrate in effective fashion the activity of the Chapter. The complete list of officers and committees introduces the chapter roll in which is found the name and address of each active member in good standing and of all resident alumni. The secretary has added at the end of the booklet a brief appeal to the membership that evidences his own devotion to the work and explains in good part the success of the chapter activities. The machine will work well when the wheels are set true and well oiled.